

Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Chairwoman of the House Committee on Rules, issued the following statement following the release of a Government Accountability Office report raising new questions about the Pentagon's troubled testing program for soldier's body armor. Slaughter was the first lawmaker to raise questions about the reliability of the military's testing system for armor plates, which are worn by some members of the military deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"This again confirms my concern that the Pentagon has been slow to come up with a reliable testing protocol for our soldiers' last line of defense," Slaughter said. "Since Day 1 on this issue, I have asked for a system that produces armor that offers the maximum protection to our servicemen and women. The GAO's study shows that the Army didn't follow its own guidelines and incorrectly measured crucial data. I am pleased that the military responded to my earlier concerns by ending the practice of contracting out the testing. However, even if it is conducted in-house by Army personnel, we must have confidence that the tests are reliable."

Slaughter first flagged concerns about the armor's reliability in 2006, resulting in a blistering report from the Department of Defense Inspector General that cited problems with testing documentation and oversight. That first request sparked a hearing before a House subcommittee and led to other reviews. A full summary of the timeline on this issue is below.

- **January 28, 2009** – Department of Defense Inspector General delivers to Congresswoman Slaughter Report No. D-2009-047, *DoD Testing Requirements for Body Armor*.
- Report finds that first article testing for Army Contract 0040 was not consistently conducted or scored in accordance with contract terms, conditions and specifications
 - The contracting officer technical representative made an unauthorized change to Contract 0040 by instructing the testing facility officials to deviate from the Contract Purchase Description without approval from the Contracting Officer
- **June 26, 2008** – The Department of Defense Inspector General sends response to Congresswoman Slaughter's concerns about March 31 DoD Procurement Policy for Body Armor.

- Following an April 10, 2008 House Armed Service Committee hearing, Chairman Abercrombie requested the DoD Office of the Inspector General and Office of the Secretary of the Assistant Army come to an agreement regarding their recommendations of the March 31 report. The response sent to Congresswoman Slaughter documents the terms of the agreement.

- **June 23, 2008** – Congresswoman Slaughter sends a letter with questions regarding first article testing and contracting firms to supplement questions asked of Department of Defense Inspector General in a June 20, 2008 letter and meeting.

- **June 20, 2008** – Meeting between Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter and Inspector General Claude Kicklighter

- Purpose is to follow up on the March 31st request. During this meeting, Congresswoman Slaughter requests that the IG to look at records from the testing facilities and contractors to verify that FAT was conducted for all the body armor contracts, and that all contracts passed FAT. IG agrees.

- Congresswoman Slaughter sends questions regarding March 31 DoD Procurement Policy for Body Armor report to Department of Defense Inspector General

- **April 10, 2008** – Armed Services Air and Land Forces Subcommittee hearing on Army acquisition programs

- In response to the IG report, Lieutenant General N. Ross Thompson, III states that all body armor is tested to the fullest extend, and that the deficiencies identified in the report were solely in documentation.

- **March 31, 2008** – The Department of Defense Inspector General releases Report No. D-2008-067, DoD Procurement Policy for Body Armor

- Report concludes that there were deficiencies in first article testing (FAT) in 13 of the 28 Army body armor contracts awarded between January 2004 and December 2006. Many of these deficiencies involve lack of documentation indication that proper FAT had been conducted

- **April 19, 2006** – Congresswoman Slaughter sends request to Department of Defense Acting Inspector General Thomas F. Gimble asking for a review of the Department of Defense's procurement policies for body armor and armored vehicles, following an internal Pentagon memo revealed by *The New York Times* in January 2006, which found that 80 percent of marines killed in Iraq due to upper body wounds could have survived if they had extra body armor